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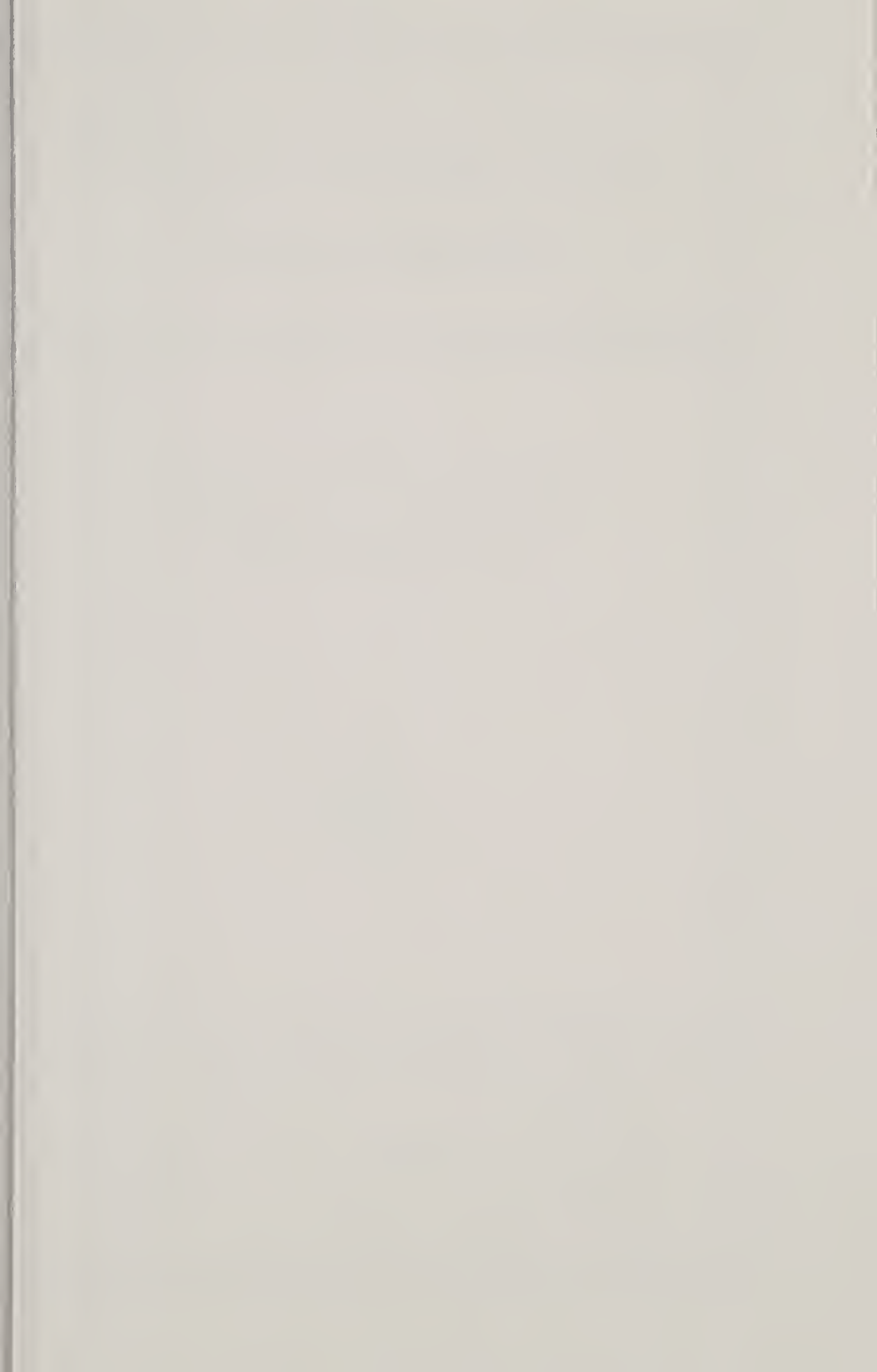
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# Neighboring New Americans

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By  
MARY CLARK BARNES

*Author of "Stories and Songs for  
Teaching English," etc.*



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*"In America man stands face to face with  
a civilization in the making."*

## The House of Brotherhood

" **A**MERICA, America !  
The shouts of war shall cease ;  
The Glory dawns ! The Day is come  
Of Victory and Peace !

And now upon a larger plan  
We'll build the common good,  
The Temple of the Love of Man,  
The House of Brotherhood.

What though its stones were laid in tears,  
Its pillars red with wrong,  
Its walls shall rise through patient years  
To soaring spires of song !  
For on this House shall Faith attend,  
With Joy on airy wing,  
And flaming Loyalty ascend  
To God, the only King.

America, America !  
Ring out the glad refrain !  
Salute the Flag—salute the dead,  
That have not died in vain !  
O Glory ! Glory to thy plan  
To build the common good,  
The Temple of the Rights of Man,  
The House of Brotherhood."

## I

### THE APPROACH

A SCHOOLBOY studying the poems of Robert Browning as a part of his course in English literature was asked by an older friend, "Isn't Browning hard to be understood?" "No," was the quick reply, "the Browning is easy, but the notes we have to learn about it are awfully hard."

Some of the definitions and "the notes" which we are supposed to master about the much discussed "Americanization Problem" of our day are vastly entertaining even if they are not "awfully hard."

That we who are supposed to compose the great model Democracy of the World should grope about awkwardly for "a method" of knocking at the door of a foreign-born neighbor and going in to face the question of finding common names for common things of mutual concern indicates how far we have drifted from normal human relationships.

Brigadier General W. J. Nicholson of the U. S.

Army, writing of the educational work done in Camp Upton, authorizes the statement that: "In three months and often in less time men were taught sufficient English to enable them to receive, execute and transmit verbal orders and messages intelligently, and also to read and understand ordinary written or printed matter as contained in the various drill regulations, soldiers' handbooks, etc." The Roster of these men represents fourteen nationalities, including one American. (Formerly illiterate.)

General Nicholson adds, "The most amazing thing is that these men within a few days after their entry into the army lose their racial feelings. They eat together, sleep together, go to school together and drill together. They rub elbows with each other and learn each other's good points, and get the American view-point in a remarkably short time."

Now this which General Nicholson reports as, "The most amazing thing" resulting from the educational experiment in Camp Upton is the desired goal of most of the "Americanization work" which occupies public attention at the present time.

The methods used in Camp Upton would be as successful in civilian communities as in military camps. If we will face, once for all, the impera-

tive obligation to conserve "the man power of this nation and the increase in efficiency in the production" of all that makes for the realization of high ideals of peace, as we faced and met the obligation to conserve in war-time, our "Americanization Problem" soon will vanish.

A man who had known in another camp training similar to that which had been conducted in Camp Upton came to the Neighbors League of America seeking employment after being mustered out of the army. He was referred to the nearest Government Employment Office.

"I was there," he responded.

"And you found no work?"

"Work? Yes, but in basement," he replied. "No good light even in day; no air, nothing good. I went to see. No, it is impossible now."

After a pause during which the Neighbors League member waited, watching him silently, he continued, "Five years ago when I came in America first, I was glad for anything. I did work in basement. I worked hard all day. At evening I worked hard in school to get English. I went to war for America myself,—not by draft. Now, these months I have been man with men, out in the open. My eyes, they know the sunshine. My lungs, they learned the taste of fresh air. They have ex-



panded.” He threw back his broad shoulders with a gesture of pride as he added, “I, too, am larger. I now am American citizen. I cannot go back to basement to work in dark with no air.”

“What do you want to do?”

“I would be farmer,” he replied. “As American Citizen, I should take some ground for my own, and make it do its best for me and,—for more than just me. Government promised us that. Government should not send us back to dark, close, basement for work.”

Later in the conversation he talked of his life in the camp.

“The teachers were fine,” he said. “They knew that I was just workman. That made no difference. Every man was *man*, all together. Camp is a great place to find out men and friends.”

“Did they all enjoy it as you did?”

“Well, you know with 1,500 men from all kinds of countries, they cannot all be just alike. Every man of them knows that he needs English here. It was the first chance that had come to many. They worked hard to get all they could. To some, just to know that they *must* seemed reason for not doing it. All would like Neighbors League idea, just learn English to be neighborly, and help everybody. Is that it? I know for sure that this is what they all



need, English language and good neighbors. Lots of us fellows have found that out. The fellows who have come back, they understand."

We who never went, do we understand?

"I prayed for a good neighbor, but I did not know that it could be," said a woman of foreign lineage recently. That prayer fills the soul of many a foreign-born resident in America.

Quick illumination of the face of a non-English-speaking man or woman in response to some little neighborly attention will often reveal a hungry soul looking out in search of friends.

The foreign-born mothers of America's children are the most isolated of all our non-English-speaking people. It is reported that thirty-five to fifty per cent. of them are absolutely illiterate and that thirty-five to eighty per cent. are illiterate in English. Less than one per cent. of them are reported as being enrolled in classes for learning English. The home cares of the mothers of large families of little children prevent their regular attendance at public classes even in communities in which such classes have been provided.

Beginnings in many cases must be with individuals. The immigrant woman, whose home cares prevent frequent contacts with the outside world, is usually shy, sensitive to criticism, and fears to

expose her ignorance and her mistakes by trying to learn with others. Sometimes the first offer of lessons in English to a woman of this type is declined with the excuse "too old," "too busy," "too dumb," or "not want," although a keen observer can read in wistful eyes a longing for the help which is rejected instinctively from lack of courage to make the venture. Persistent encouragement has brought success in many cases of this kind.

Among many reasons for according special consideration to them is the fact that in addition to being potential voters in their own right, they, as the mothers of a large proportion of America's children, hold the keys of America's future.

In any city in the northern States compare the number of children in homes in so-called "residential sections" with the number of children in the "foreign district." By as much as the children in the alleys outnumber the children on the avenues, by so much is the potential voting power of the alley for to-morrow greater than that of the avenues. Study of history reveals the fact that in a democracy under republican forms of government, leadership comes oftener from the man born in the alley or in the rural district than from the one born on the avenue. Leadership of men is less easily ac-

quired by one born to wealth than by one born to poverty, one whose whole life involves training in overcoming obstacles.

The foreign-born parents of America's children have met the physical tests required for their admission to the United States. They have had the ambition, the enterprise, the faith, the initiative, which have led them to leave the land of their nativity, the old home, the old ties, the old associations, in search of something better for themselves and their children—motives which have been the spur to immigration in all climes, in all ages.

Children so fathered, so mothered, are quick, alert, eager to take their places as citizens in the land whose fame has been the lure of their parents.

Proud of being Americans, they sing "My Country, 'tis of Thee." They salute the flag, their flag. They listen to stories of American heroes told by Teacher in school and read more of them in books provided by Teacher. They live in a world of their own, a world glowing with stirring adventures and heroic deeds.

With every sense quickened by contact with the new environment, they become acutely conscious of the contrast between Teacher and the foreign-looking, foreign-acting, foreign-speaking Mother and Father.

A growing conviction of the failure of their parents to understand not only the new language but also the rules of the new life, leads to the rejection of their influence and of their authority.

Public school, Sunday school, Industrial school and other "Child-Welfare" organizations may claim the children during, at most, thirty-eight hours of the week. During the remaining 130 hours of each week they are a law unto themselves. The fact that a large proportion of the children found in Juvenile Courts are the children of law-abiding foreign-born parents results from their separation from their parents by a gulf of alien speech, leaving them virtually orphaned in their own homes. If these alert, sensitive girls and boys, eager for their part in American life, could see an American woman, not necessarily "Teacher," but one manifestly quite the equal of "Teacher" coming into the home as Mother's friend, teaching Mother the English language as a means of opening possibilities of mutual understanding and interest, discussing with Mother, American customs and ideals; if growing boys could see an intelligent American man coming to "Father" in neighborly fashion, teaching English, discussing community interests with him—mothers and fathers in homes of our New Americans would regain and hold the



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parental influence and control which are essential to the efficiency and the stability of our national life.

This is the tragedy not only of family life, but no less of national life. Obedience to just laws, reverence for rightly constituted authority are fundamental essentials of security and peace in every land.

What part have native-born Americans played in the tragedy? Have we segregated ourselves from the newcomers by promptly moving to another locality among people of our own kind, whenever "foreigners" have come to live in our neighborhood?

Have we left the man to find a "job" and the family to find a home in the slums as best they can, and then, in our hearts, and possibly in our speech, have we ranked them down as if the job and the slum home represented their ideals of life? But the cost of exchanging the free, open-air life of a peasant home for the darkened existence of close, crowded quarters in the narrowest of our city streets, was something which they could not count, because it had been unknown to them. In thousands of cases they have settled down to it in a spirit bordering on despair—a mute, unutterable despair.

When it has dawned on us, more or less clearly, that the lack of mutual understanding between parents and children leaves something to be desired for the normal development of the children, we have created and multiplied "Child-Welfare Organizations" and clubs and classes of many types and many titles. But the fundamental lack is there, for there can be no efficient child welfare which does not include "parent welfare." We must begin—not as theorizers, but as practical workers. "What to do?" is the real Americanization problem, so far as native-born Americans are concerned. What to do?

We have done some things. Yes. We have had "mothers' meetings" in the schoolhouse or in the mission chapel in "down-town neighborhoods." The mothers have come, babies in arms, and little children too young to go to school clinging to their skirts. They have sat in rows at one end of the room and have watched their older children being put through their paces on a platform at the other end of the room. They have smiled their uncomprehending smiles at the pronouncements which they could not understand. They have been given tea and wafers; their babies have been patted and praised and they have gone away, still wearing their pathetic smiles, and in their hearts a fresh



impression of the distance between them and their Americanized children.

We have failed to touch the heart of the problem. The need is for personal human friendship, expressed in mutually understood speech. Their hearts are hungry for American neighbors; and adequate neighboring requires the use of a common language. To teach them America's language in order that they may learn America's ideals, is the first necessity in genuinely efficient Americanization work.

How shall the need be met? Shall it be by an increase in institutionalism? Shall it be by adding to the machinery of social agencies?

Churches, public schools, industrial plants, chambers of commerce, clubs, settlements, can do much, but in the last analysis, all depends on the personal element. The need cannot be met by sending to "the foreign quarter" "missionaries, speaking in their own languages," to the people who are huddled together there, and by going down on special occasions to give the sanction of our presence to the movement. We must give ourselves. War problems were met by personal service. We still are in the early dawn of the "morning after."

We who gave husbands and sons and brothers in that black night of horror to bring Christian de-

mocracy to the world, how shall we withhold ourselves from the service needed to complete the work for which they gave their lives? This is the new crusade which challenges all our powers, all our resources of insight, of sympathy, of native intelligence and discernment, all our education and training.

Like every great movement, its method is simple. Just genuine, personal, direct, neighboring; woman with woman, man with man, native-born with foreign-born, in the spirit of Him who gave Himself "that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

## II

### TEACHING ENGLISH TO ADULTS

**T**HE first essential is sympathetic observance of the Golden Rule.

If I were a foreigner in Russia, in Bulgaria, in Korea, in any country whose language I could not understand or speak, certain words would be especially necessary for me.

Among the terms which I should need first, would be, "name, country, go, east, west, north, south, man, woman, show, help, people."

In order to secure my living, whether at a hotel table, or through work and wages and marketing, I should need to know the terms for ordinary articles of food, such as "bread, water, milk, meat, cheese, cake."

In connection with industry I should need the terms for "planting, building, mending, buying, selling, losing, finding, cooking, baking, serving, sweeping, sewing."

In order to become acquainted, even in an elementary way, with the social customs of the country, I should need to know the terms used to desig-

nate "wife, husband, father, mother, brother, sister, relative, employer, servant, clothing, goods, riches."

These terms and others composing the vocabulary of common life and daily need are used so constantly in Old Testament narratives and New Testament parables that it is easy to give elementary lessons in English wholly through Biblical material.

In a multitude of cases this material has proved to be as new, as impressive, to classes of adults learning English through its use as to those who heard it for the first time in ancient days.

An incident proving their lack of familiarity with it occurred in a class of working men taking their first lessons in English in Mariners' Temple, New York, in the summer of 1913. Their reading lesson one evening was the story of Abraham's sending his servant to the old country to find a good wife for Isaac.

At ten o'clock they reached the question, "Will you give Rebekah to be the wife of Isaac?" It was long past the hour for closing the lesson, but the men refused to go home unless the teacher would first tell them whether or not she married him. The story was as new to them as if it had been printed for the first time in the evening paper of that day.



The beginning is made most naturally with Old Testament stories devoted to affairs of life described in concrete terms.

Carefully chosen passages expressed in modern terms, will lead directly on through a vocabulary of words whose meaning can be given through objects and signs until the pupil is able to grasp the deeper significance of New Testament stories.

The parables of Jesus through which He revealed the very heart of His Gospel are so closely allied to the activities of common life and so wonderfully simple in expression that for the purpose of teaching English, they far surpass all modern compositions.

“Black-board work” and merely oral teaching are inadequate and unsatisfactory in first lessons.

With the foreigner, as with ourselves, the acquiring of a new language is sufficiently difficult to require the advantage of uniformly printed pages rather than that the pupil be subjected to the bewilderment resulting from a study of the irregularities of personal handwriting.

An illustrated lesson book to be the property of the pupil, and to be used for study between lesson hours, is of prime importance. It should be in clear print, with illustrations adapted for use with

adjacent text and with plain standard script to be copied in lesson writing.

### *Method of Work*

In order to demonstrate a method it is necessary to consider a definite lesson.

A "First Lesson" which has been used successfully hundreds of times in teaching English to non-English-speaking people in America and in other lands, is this:

#### \* LESSON 1

#### *Abraham the Immigrant*

A man named Abraham lived in a country of the East.

God said to Abraham, "Go out of your country to a country that I will show you.

"I will help you. You shall help people."

East	West	North	South
	I	You	

I. Begin with "I" and "You." The teacher, indicating himself, says, "I, I, I," slowly, emphatically, watching the face of the pupil to catch his recognition of the meaning of the word.

Then, indicating the pupil, the teacher pronounces "You, you, you."

\* "Stories and Songs for Teaching English." Fleming H. Revell Company.



By signs, indicating the lips, lead the pupil to pronounce "I," and "you."

When the words are understood and have been pronounced, indicate them on the lesson page. Let the pupil find "I" and "you" wherever they appear on the page.

II. Next the teacher may pronounce his own name, saying, "I am named Smith. How are you named?"

With the help of repetition and gesture the meaning of the question becomes clear and the pupil is led to pronounce his own name. The teacher repeats the name given by the pupil; for example, Rodinsky, and leads the pupil to say, "I am named Rodinsky."

As soon as its meaning is clear, indicate the word "named" in the lesson book. It is important that speaking and reading should be taught together so that the printed page may be at hand to confirm and fix the memory of the lesson in intervals between lessons.

III. After "I," "you," and "named" have been mastered, teach the points of the compass, requiring the pupil to pronounce correctly, "North, South, East, West," indicating the directions as the words are pronounced.

The teacher should be sure to know the local

points of the compass before beginning the lesson and to be able to indicate them without the slightest hesitation. The pupil's success in some critical time may depend on his ability to understand a direction to go east or south or west rather than north.

Teach the printed names of the points of the compass. Then turn to the map and teach directions there.

IV. Show America on the map. Say, "I show you our country, America. We live in America. Where did you live?" Do not try to explain your question by adding more words. That would only add confusion. Repeat the same words slowly, distinctly, indicating on the map the country which you suppose to be that from which the pupil has come, and asking, "Did you live in Russia? Italy?" etc., until response is given. Then secure from the pupil the statement, "I lived in Russia," or "I lived in Italy," or whatever country was the home of the pupil.

Then call attention on the map to the fact that America is a country of the West. Russia, or Italy, or Greece is a country of the East.

The map study unfailingly brings closer acquaintance between teacher and pupil and promotes mutual understanding. Teach "lived"

and "country" and "show" on the printed page.

V. Let the pupil read the first sentence of the lesson. Use the words of the sentence in conversation, as, "How was the man named?" Require a full sentence in reply, as, "The man was named Abraham."

"Where did Abraham live?" "Abraham lived in a country of the East."

VI. In teaching the second sentence the teacher walks out of the room, saying slowly, distinctly, "I go out."

If the pupil seems not to understand, repeat the act and the words, watching for indication of comprehension on his part. Then say to the pupil, "You go out," and require him to go and return. When it is certain that the words "go out" are understood, indicate them on the printed page.

VII. In teaching "help," direct the pupil to lift a table or some other heavy article of furniture, and say, "I will help you," and then help to lift the burden.

VIII. Indicate as "people," the man, woman and children in a picture. Should several pupils be included in the class, indicate "I," and one of the pupils as "you," and the others as "people."

IX. Let the pupil review the entire lesson.

Watch the faces. They are your reading book. You must be their dictionary. Be quick in responding to their need for further help. Use short words and few. Speak slowly. Articulate distinctly. When you find an inclination to make two syllables of "named" draw a pencil through the "e" temporarily, by way of indicating the correct pronunciation. Volumes of verbal explanation at this stage of advancement would fail to convey the meaning which is fully expressed by the single pencil stroke.

Be prompt in recognizing success. "Good!" soon will be understood as expressing commendation. When Lesson I has been mastered, the teacher's "Good! You speak English!" "You read English!" will give zest to new effort.

X. Distribute blank books and pencils and require the script which is printed at the bottom of the page \* from which this lesson is quoted, to be read and copied. Be sure that they understand the script.

Speaking and reading should be associated with writing to secure definite and permanent mastery of the lesson.

### *Grading*

Pupils beginning together in one class manifest different degrees of ability to advance.

\* "Stories and Songs for Teaching English."



As conversational ability develops, we sometimes find that within one class of beginners in English we have included pupils who were high school or college students in their native land, with others who are entirely illiterate.

In justice to all it is necessary to grade such classes as early and as frequently as possible, assigning the various grades to different teachers.

### *Who Can Do the Teaching?*

Some of the most successful teachers of English to foreigners know no language but English. We have seen classes composed of representatives of six nationalities in each class, no member of the class knowing a word of English at the beginning of the lessons and all making excellent progress under the direction of teachers knowing no word of any language but English.

Interest, determination, and sympathetic patience, with thorough preparation of each lesson, will enable any one of ordinary intelligence to render this service to our non-English-speaking neighbors and, through them, to the community, to the nation, and to the Kingdom of God.

After nine weeks of lessons, three evenings a week, we have found pupils able to engage in

ordinary conversation, and to take Biography, History or an elementary book on Civics, like, for instance, "Civics for Americans in the Making," by Anna A. Plass, "Americanization and Citizenship," by Hanson Hart Webster, or the "Standard Short Course for Evening Schools," by William Estabrook Chancellor.

This last includes not only definite preparation for passing examination for naturalization, but also something of elementary Mathematics, Grammar, American History, etc.

We all appreciate the importance of acquaintance with these subjects. At what stage of advancement shall they be introduced? What material shall we use first in teaching English to non-English-speaking people?

That which we teach first will go deeper, stay longer and mean more than anything which we may be able to introduce later.

The mastery of even a very limited vocabulary of words in common use will lead the pupil to acquaint himself with the terms needed in connection with work and wages and food and shelter and clothing.

But if we spend our whole opportunity for service in imparting terms relating merely to the material side of life we have no guarantee that



through these the pupil will find his way to enduring riches.

In the glare of a continent aflame we have read more clearly than ever before the bankruptcy which results from neglect of spiritual values.

We emphasize the importance of Bible stories for the first lessons in English for two reasons:

1. In the words of a pupil in one of our classes, "Words stay in head better if come in stories."

The story form appeals to the imagination, arrests attention and is held by the memory. The lessons become a recreation rather than a task.

2. Pupils eager to learn English and indifferent in regard to the choice of lesson material have been profoundly influenced by the ideals embodied in simple Bible stories. We know that in many cases adult pupils have had no previous acquaintance with Biblical material, and except through its use in first lessons in English they might never have come in contact with that literature which, according to the verdict of history, has been more potent in modern civilization than any other body of literature that the world ever has known.

### III

#### CHURCH NEIGHBORING

**D**R. P. P. CLAXTON, United States Commissioner of Education, in "Missiles for Methodist Minute Men," says, "The Christian Church is the greatest agency that we have for Americanization." To what extent is this agency functioning effectively in the matter of securing the use of the language of America by all the people who, as residents, are making their contribution to our national life?

In the autumn of 1919 when a Congressional Committee had been sent to Pittsburgh to learn the view-point of the employees in steel industries who at that time were on strike the prominent feature of their report to the Congress of the United States was inability to learn the view-point of the employed men because, "more than fifty per cent. of them cannot speak or understand the English language."

Have the churches squarely faced that fact with its implications?

Recognition of the fact that the ability of workmen to understand and speak English will lessen delay in production and diminish "labor turn-

over " due to accidents and disablement, has led in many industrial plants to the establishment of classes for teaching the English names of tools, the terms used in directing labor, in warning of danger from machinery, and in handling industrial products.

In domestic service many a young woman has been taught what one who had received such teaching aptly characterized as "kitchen English,"—the English needed in communication between her employer and herself in securing the accomplishment of her daily tasks.

Governmental requirements for education in English contemplate such an amount of teaching and learning as will enable the pupil to understand and undertake the responsibilities of citizenship in the United States of America. What are the churches doing in teaching non-English-speaking people the language which will enable them to come into vital relationship with the general body of Christian men and women in America, adding their strength in coöperative service for the world?

The broad basis for distinctly Christian work which includes the teaching of anything which may be taught in public schools and by other governmental agencies, anything which may be taught by philanthropic and community agencies, and in addi-

tion to these, the distinctively religious truths which have inspired the highest ideals of individuals and of nations, offers a unique opportunity for service to the churches of our day.

The precepts and the example of Jesus inspire appreciation of men and women of alien nationality. He made a foreigner, a Samaritan, the hero of His story which for all time describes "The Good Neighbor."

It was to a foreigner, a Samaritan woman, that He gave His suggestive teaching concerning "Eternal Life." The recorder of this teaching, in his surprise at the Teacher's choice of a pupil, makes the significant statement that "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." It would seem that even in the first century of the Christian era the teaching of foreigners was a subject of interest.

Whether or not there was current discussion of their degree of appreciation for services rendered them we do not know, but it is recorded in the story of the cleansing of ten lepers that "one of them, a Samaritan, when he saw that he was healed, turned back and fell on his face at the feet of Jesus, giving him thanks." Jesus answering said, "Were there none found that returned to give glory to God but this stranger?"

The First Church in Jerusalem, not ignoring the



example of its Founder, ordained "seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom," to minister to foreigners in the community. Greeks were especially named in this connection.

"The Problem of the Down-town Church" in many a city of to-day could be solved by Christian neighboring in the densely populated districts in which such churches are stranded.

Assuming, carelessly, that "They all go to their own churches," we have not realized that a large proportion of New Americans, coming to us from countries in which State and Church are united, have considered that their farewell to native land included both, and have made no approach to any religious organization or service in this country.

Our fear of being charged with "proselyting" (whatever that long word may mean), has prevented our offering to share with them what is most precious in our own lives.

An Italian woman, a mother of nine children, at the end of her third lesson in English, looking wistfully at her teacher, asked:

"Lady, you Protestante?"

"Yes," responded the teacher, "And you?" They both waited while the Italian woman was struggling to find English words expressing her meaning. Finally she said slowly:



“Sometimes me, my girl, in dark, go stand by church, hear sing.” She indicated a church building near her home.

“Why do you not go in?”

Lifting her shoulders and spreading her hands in an expression of impossibility she replied, “Know nobody. Everybody look strange at us.”

No one in the Church of Jesus Christ can appropriately “look strange at” one who comes with hungry heart longing for neighborly fellowship.

Chambers of Commerce, Public Schools, Libraries, Settlements, Industrial Plants, all are able to make valuable contributions to the campaign for the promotion of neighborliness through teaching the common language of our country, but no other organization can take the place of the churches in providing adequate motive and inspiration for such service. It is a service bringing rich compensations to those who engage in it.

An undergraduate college man who had promised to teach English to a class of working men said when he saw that the lesson-book offered was composed of Biblical material, “I cannot use that. There are so many different theories of inspiration of everything that I don’t know what I believe. Having refused again and again to take a Sunday-school class, I surely cannot undertake to teach

religious theories to these hard-headed men of a dozen different races, creeds, and no creeds."

"You are not asked to teach theories or creeds," was the reply. "This lesson material is composed largely of the parables of Jesus, the stories which He told to multitudes of people concerning the common activities of every-day life. It is certain that in telling them He did not teach theories or creeds, because His own disciples used to come to Him afterward asking Him to 'Tell us the meaning of the parable.'

"Follow His method. Give the story. Leave it to make its own impression, as He did. When you have made sure that your pupils can understand, speak, read and write every word in the lesson, using each word in direct conversation, your work with that lesson will be done." He undertook the work on that basis and carried it steadily through nine weeks, two evenings a week.

A year later, speaking to a company of teachers concerning this experience, he said, "Whatever it may have done for those foreign-born men, it did more for me than anything else that ever has come into my life. Seeing, week by week, what they needed, I learned to face what I need. To-day, I know where I stand."

A year later he entered as student in a theological

seminary, and later became a missionary in Asia, determining, as he said, to invest his life "where the need is greatest."

Recent years have revealed unknown powers of resourcefulness, of leadership, of heroism, among young women and young men who had been living lives of conventional routine. If the churches will rally their young people to the task, giving them a degree of responsibility proportioned to their powers, the slogan,—*"A Literate America in 1921"* may easily be realized.

When it shall become possible for all our people to understand and speak one language then the way will be open for the communication and the interpretation of those spiritual ideals without which our national life would not be worth living or worth perpetuating.

The Census report for 1920 is awaited eagerly for statistics of our polyglot population. There is reason to expect that foreign-born women will soon outnumber foreign-born men in America. It was so in some localities before the war.

Even as early as 1902, the Research Bureau of the Federation of Churches and Religious Organizations of New York City reported that, "throughout Manhattan, as a whole, foreign-born women exceed foreign-born men by 1,298," and that "in Brook-

lyn the excess of women over men is even greater than in Manhattan.”

The Rhode Island Bureau of Industrial Statistics reported in 1909 that women between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine exceeded the number of men of the same ages in that State by 1,902, almost 2,000.

It seems inevitable that the disparity in numbers will be even greater in the immediate future. Native American women are facing a very large opportunity for service in neighboring foreign-born women now in America, and those who will come. It is reported that 5,000,000 American women were knitting and making surgical dressings for army men in 1918.

As the bereft women of other lands turn to our shores in the days immediately before us will the women of the churches, who have learned to “speed up” in the tasks of war-time, hasten to meet the no less urgent task of knitting into unity the scattered threads of community life, making it possible through common speech and common understanding for us all to work together for the good of each, and enabling each one to work for the good of all?

Christian neighboring must be personal and must develop personality; not personality isolated, segre-



gated from community life, but personality responsive, articulate, coöperative with others.

An intelligent young woman, a college graduate, desiring to fit herself for Americanization work, was given a comprehensive definition of Americanization as published by a well-known organization. After studying it for a time in silence she said: "I had not realized that it would be so intricate, so complicated. I fear that I must turn to something else." After being persuaded to ignore the definition for a time and to enter into neighborly relations with one non-English-speaking woman, teaching that woman to speak, read, and write the language of her adopted country, she became an enthusiastic and successful worker. One day early in 1918, offering to give lessons to a foreign-born woman knowing little English, she met this response:

"Want no America language. Want no America lady. Hate America! Want only America bring back my man." The woman's eyes were swollen with weeping. She looked the picture of despair as she sat in a rear room of a shabby tenement with a puny little baby in her arms and bemoaned the drafting of her husband into the army, leaving her with "no friend this side of the sea." The teacher's reply, condensed from many conversations, was this



in substance: "I am your neighbor. Neighbors must be friends. I come from a league of neighbors. We all are your friends. We are with you in your trouble. We stand together. We can be better friends if we can talk more together. If you understand me, if I understand you, we can do more for each other." The magic of Christian neighborliness won the victory in this case and in many others. It was not all accomplished in a moment. Persistent tact, genuine neighborliness which could not be vanquished met the need.

With lessons in English came steadily growing understanding and appreciation. Then came some degree of comprehension of the meaning of the war in which her man and our men were engaged. Then came ability to read the letters which her man had learned to write, then ability to write her own letter in reply. All through was a deepening consciousness of the love and care of a Heavenly Father whose children are neighbors and friends together.

The story of months of experience condensed in these few sentences can give no suggestion of the interest which develops in the progress of the work. As Jesus was ready to give His highest messages to an audience of one by the well-side or to a timid soul who came to Him at night, so the Neighbors League worker, following His method, will be ready to begin informally with a class of one and to give to that one such service as to justify increase of numbers.

## IV.

### COÖPERATION WITH DAILY VACATION SCHOOLS

**D**AILY Vacation Bible Schools for children in summer time have been meeting growing appreciation during the last twelve years. The number of such schools has steadily multiplied.

The great banner inscribed with the words "Daily Vacation Bible School," conspicuously displayed in front of the meeting place brings a throng of boys and girls as regular attendants in the crowded sections of our cities. Teaching English to the parents of these children would supplement the work of Vacation Schools by dealing with the home side of child welfare.

Summer is an especially favorable time for neighboring New Americans. In normal times immigration is larger in spring and summer than in other seasons. Newly arrived immigrants are more eager to know America at first hand than those who have been here long enough to have become

settled in colonies of their own people and to have found channels of life and work through which they can "get along," with fewest adaptations to new customs. Even for those who have become settled in America, the longer daylight of summer time, release from the rigors of winter weather, enabling them to go out and in with greater freedom, the open doors which give readier access to family life, the "slack work" in some employments—all these conditions favor the beginning of neighborly advances. The parents whose children attend the Daily Vacation Bible School generally are ready to welcome teachers for themselves.

The fact that evening classes for foreigners in connection with public schools usually close in early spring to reopen in late autumn gives exceptionally wide opportunity for using this interval in making helpful acquaintance with our non-English-speaking people.

The failure of immigrant parents to understand the language used by their children explains the fact that from eighty to ninety per cent. of the children found in juvenile courts in our country are children of the foreign-born. Records show that the foreign-born parents, notwithstanding their inability to read laws and prohibitions, are not more criminal than American-born parents.

Delinquencies on the part of the children in the great majority of cases can be traced directly to loss of parental authority and influence due to the lack of mutually understood language and ideals.

In public schools the children readily learn the English language. In classes they stand shoulder to shoulder with American-born children of their own age and not infrequently surpass them in quickness of perception and in rate of progress.

They go home to a mother who does not look or talk or act or think like "Teacher." She knows nothing of this wonderful America which is filling the horizon of all their thoughts and dreams and ambitions. It is easy for them to reach the conclusion that any companions using the language of America must be more desirable, more "advanced," than a mother and a father who fail to understand the language of the country in which they are living.

A public-school teacher said recently: "The brightest boy in my school is going wrong. If his parents and I could coöperate with each other we might save him, but when I go to confer with them this boy is the only interpreter between us. Will you not go, or get some one else to go into that home to teach English to the father and mother, and so help to save the boy?"

Young women especially trained for this service



and making it their vocation will be able to open the way for a multitude of volunteer workers who regularly will devote a certain portion of time to neighboring and teaching foreign-born women. "Regularly" is the important word in this connection.

A teacher of English to foreign-born adults being congratulated on the large number of volunteer helpers enrolled for her district replied, "Their irregularity drives me almost to despair. They enlist and work enthusiastically until some counter attraction lures them. Sometimes it is an exceptionally fine entertainment; sometimes the visit of a friend or some other social engagement which leads them to ignore the obligations which they have assumed. They seem to consider it a light matter to break an engagement with a non-English-speaking pupil but it takes a long time to restore the confidence destroyed by an experience of that kind." To the non-English-speaking pupils it is impossible to explain in detail the reason of the failure even when the leader is notified in time to attempt explanations. With their limited vocabulary they use few words in stating the facts to each other as they see them: "She say come. Not come. She lie."

The short ugly word which closes their state-

ment of the case is the word which characterizes their impression of the teacher whom they had begun to trust.

Their days are full of work. It is not easy for them to make time for lessons. Engagements once made with them should be kept if possible at whatever cost of rearranging plans with friends who are able to understand reasons for necessary changes. Experiences of this kind are due more to lack of understanding of the delicacy of relations involved than to deliberate ignoring of moral obligations. It is important that we guard against them steadily in advance and prevent their recurrence if possible.

We need the volunteer teachers. The volunteer teachers need the experience which comes through this type of service.

An army of native-born American women coming voluntarily into neighborly relations with foreign-born women, teaching them the language and the ideals of America, would do more to solve "The Americanization Problem" than any other possible agency.

Willingness to begin with one pupil often is the key to success with a whole neighborhood. When one woman in a tenement begins to learn English the woman across the hall comes in, the woman upstairs comes down, and a class makes itself. A

little later, with the growth of acquaintance and confidence, the class may be moved to a more adequate meeting place, where the babies may be cared for separately, leaving the mothers free to devote themselves to lessons. A church, a vacant store, a tent, any place in which a Vacation Bible School may be held in the morning, is a suitable place for afternoon or evening classes for adults.

A woman with a little baby in her arms trying to learn English while two little ones were clinging to her skirts and demanding possession of her book turned eagerly to her teacher with the question, "You have place, I go, you?" Slowly summoning her vocabulary of English words, she explained, "Maybe, evening, my man keep babies, I go your place, learn more."

A little store in the neighborhood was rented with an adjoining room in which "babies" can be cared for while mothers are taught the English lessons which mean so much to them. "Now, maybe," one woman said exultantly, "when my boy, man, he not think Mother, dunce."

The unfailing interest of children in Bible stories has been recognized by teachers in Vacation Schools. To enable the parents of these children to read such stories in English is to supplement the work of the school by creating a new bond of com-

mon interest and sympathy between parents and children.

In a Christmas entertainment in which both New Americans and older Americans participated, I have seen mothers born in Russia, in Verona, in Sicily, reciting responsively in English with their adolescent sons some of the noblest passages of our Scriptures.

Many of those who come to us from across the sea are from countries in which the Bible has not been an open book, and in which they have had little opportunity to judge of its value. Professor J. R. Green, the great historian of the English people, says of the making of modern England: "No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. . . . Far greater than its effect on literature or social phrase was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large. . . . Its effect in this way, however dispassionately we examine it, was simply amazing. The whole temper of the nation was changed. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class."



This is the dispassionate verdict, not of an ecclesiastic but of a clear-eyed historian of national life. Does America need to-day less than England needed three hundred years ago, "a new moral and religious impulse"?

That new religious consciousness which the great historian describes as coming into England with the coming of the Bible in the common speech of the people was strongly dominant in those who crossed the sea to make the new England and the new nation on these shores. To-day the old Pilgrim stock is fading out and is being replaced by people who never have known the experience which Professor Green so vividly describes. To them, even as to the people of old England three hundred years ago, the teachings of the Bible in the speech of every-day life would fall "on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty."

## V

### COÖPERATION WITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

**R**ECENT legislation providing for coöperation "with the several States in the education of illiterates or other persons unable to understand, speak, read, or write the English language gives hope of the dawning of a new day in which our polyglot people may become able to think together, speak together, and act together for the common good."

The new educational opportunity involves new opportunity and new obligation to demonstrate the democratic, the neighborly, spirit essential in winning and holding the love and loyalty of all, whether "Americans by chance or Americans by choice."

Duly elected legislators in the halls of Congress may write our laws on the pages of statute books. It is the electors at home who have power to re-write those laws in the hearts of the people.

Our public schools, like all governmental

agencies, can have only that degree of efficiency which we, the people, give to them. Being "of the people, for the people," and supported "by the people," they should be made to represent increasingly the highest educational ideals of our most intelligent and public-spirited citizens.

In respect especially to the education of non-English-speaking adults all provisions made through our public school system leave much to be supplemented by personal influence and effort. The provisions of the bill recently passed by our Senate (the "Kenyon Bill"), are not available within any State in which the required conditions have not been accepted, including the making available for the purposes of this Act "an amount equal to that allotted to the State by the United States."

The people of each State face to-day a new opportunity for interpreting "what America is to the man who lives here."

As the sums appropriated for carrying out the provisions of this Act are available chiefly for "the payment of salaries of teachers, supervisors, or directors of education, or for the preparation of teachers, supervisors, and directors of education," large opportunity remains for the citizens of any State and of any community within any State to regulate the conditions under which the required

“classes of instruction for not less than two hundred hours per annum ” shall be held.

Is it true that in some communities in which “Evening Classes for Adult Foreigners ” have been held, men and women who had spent the day in hard manual labor have been expected to spend four evenings a week learning English while wedged between seats and desks adapted in size to the comfort of small girls and boys?

Is it true that teachers for these classes often have come to them so wearied from their daytime teaching as to be unable to do their best work for the evening classes?

Is it true that many of the teachers have tried to use for adult men and women the same books and the same methods which they had been using in teaching children during the day?

Is it true that notwithstanding all these unfavorable conditions, evening classes for adult foreigners have been so crowded at the beginning of the season that teachers have found it impossible to give to each pupil the amount of personal attention which each one of us requires in attempting to learn a new language?

Is it true that the number of teachers provided has been insufficient to allow of necessary grading of classes, and that pupils of high-school and col-



lege education in their native lands have been held in the same classes with illiterates who could not make equal progress in learning English?

Is it true that when attendance at the classes has decreased rapidly after the first few weeks we, without careful study of conditions, have been ready to infer that the decrease was due to lack of desire for education on the part of pupils?

What have we done by way of trying the effect of more favorable conditions?

Would it be practicable through the influence of intelligent voters to increase the appropriations of money for schools for illiterate and non-English-speaking pupils and so to make more efficient service possible?

If not, there still remains the open field for personal work. There is large opportunity for private service in supplementing the work of the schools by teaching individuals or small groups of pupils whose home cares or occupational disadvantages prevent their regular attendance at public classes, even in communities in which such classes exist.

In small towns, in rural districts, in outlying sections of cities, are great areas with non-English-speaking residents living isolated lives almost untouched by the influence of American neighborliness. In the smaller community the relative need

may be as great and the number of people with a vision of the importance of the work may be relatively less than in the large city.

There can be no true Americanism which does not include understanding and use of the language of America. "Neighboring" is limited and greatly hampered until a vocabulary of mutually understood words can be acquired. But acquaintance with America's language is a mere beginning of the process of becoming an American.

What is most important is not that our people all become able to understand and pronounce the words of the English language. The strongest anarchists among us can do that. The kind of words which they incline to pronounce is a matter of more vital importance than their accent in pronunciation. What are we doing to influence the ideas and the ideals which their language lessons will enable them to express?

To employ teachers of the abstract principles of democracy for our foreign-born residents while failing to demonstrate those principles in our personal relations with them is to imperil their confidence not only in our personal sincerity but even in the validity of those ideals.

To the man who has come across the sea to make his home with us, the words and the deeds of our

ancestors count far less than do the attitude and the spirit of those whom he finds representing what America is to-day.

He, too, treasures the names of national heroes of the past, of a time when his native land had an honorable history. He has come to America in search of something better than his own land offers to-day. To him, at first, we native-born Americans are the exponents of that "something better" which he seeks. Who can measure the consequences of our failures to meet our unconscious responsibilities in that respect?

In order to respond adequately to the questioning spirit which they bring to us, we greatly need closer acquaintance with the ideas, the ideals, even the conventionalities, of the countries from which our new Americans have come.

Recently a teacher of English to adult foreigners, making careful study of public schools, "the most American of all our institutions," reported the especially excellent Americanization work being done in a certain one of the schools, not only in class work but through recreational activities. Following is an extract from the report:

"The principal, in speaking of the social evening on Thursdays, mentioned among other things that here in the open center of the large basement room

they have dancing, with music by a good orchestra. In order to make things pleasant they have groups of girls who had been 'trained to dance with the soldiers and so were not bashful' come in and dance with the men. (There are a great many more men than women in the school.) If one of these girls sees a man who looks lonesome and shy, she takes him to one side and teaches him to dance. Thus, as far as possible, every one is made to have a good time."

A little later, a Spanish speaking young man who applied for lessons in English was advised to enter this public school. He manifested a strong objection to following the advice. His limited vocabulary in English precluded thorough discussion of the merits of the case, but his objection was based unmistakably on "the dance." It is clear that the public school program makers in this case, at least, had not considered adult non-English-speaking pupils as possible critics of American social life as represented in American schools.

Any one familiar with conventional traditions and ideals of social life in Latin countries would readily understand the contrast between the custom described by the principal of this American public school and the ideas of propriety recognized in Spain, in Italy, and in Latin America. Any one



familiar with current social conditions in those countries cannot ignore the danger of even suggesting the possibility of lower standards here. To those who are unable to speak or to understand our words, our manner is capable of such interpretation as we would be least willing to allow.

Our public schools will do even nobler work than they have done when our best men and women give time and thought to helping in the study and solution of the problems which they steadily face.

The public library is an invaluable supplement to the public school. Here, too, the New American needs the neighborly help of older Americans not only in leading the way from school to library, but in keeping library and school in close touch with each other.

The chief value of the public library to New Americans is not indicated by the number of volumes or of periodicals which it offers in foreign languages, but by its facilities for promoting reading in the English language. Reading books graded to meet the ability of those who are learning the language, and placed where they can easily be found by those unaccustomed to catalogues and index cards, will be invaluable.

The citizen who is a good neighbor will be glad to suggest to librarians books desirable for this pur-

pose. As a good neighbor to native-born as well as to New Americans, he will ask that the library be well supplied with books and periodicals providing information concerning the history, conditions and customs of countries from which foreign-born residents of the community have come.

We who always have lived in America would be better neighbors to those who have come recently if our mental horizons could be widened to an understanding and appreciation of the life of other lands as well as of our own.

Are Italians numerous in the community? Then native-born Americans cannot afford to be ignorant of Italian history, tradition and art. It is not difficult to find books written in popular style which will enable readers of English to gain appreciation of the national qualities of a people who, in their darkest days, "never became barbarian." The poorest of them carries in his heart a love of beauty which the typical Anglo-Saxon may study in vain to acquire.

Are Bohemians among our neighbors? Have we realized that for centuries they have been world leaders in education as well as in bravery? In regard to their spiritual ideals, it is necessary only to call attention to the fact that through the leadership of John Huss they were Protestants one hun-

dred years before Luther's day, and that the Czechoslovaks still are known as "Biblers" by people of adjacent countries.

Do their American neighbors know that the Finns are among the most literate, the most progressive of all nationalities? Have we wished in vain to visit Greece, or, at least, to become acquainted with Greek literature? To an unusual degree, the modern Greeks, according to Professor Fairchild, have retained the characteristics and the loyalties of their ancestors, making them interesting neighbors to those who seek their acquaintance.

What can we say of Russians? Strength and idealism are the terms which come instinctively to our minds in connection with the name. No people are more worthy of study than these sturdy men and women of that dark land groping so blindly, often so mistakenly, toward what seems to them to be light.

## VI

### CONCERNING BOOKS FOR NEW AND OLD AMERICANS

**O**F a multitude of books of "First Lessons in English for Adult Foreigners," published in recent years, choose the simplest. They should not be books for children. Even the most illiterate of our foreign-born adults who have the vision and the ambition to seek in America for something better than their native lands have given them will welcome ideas as well as words in their first lessons in English. Eyes unused to following closely printed lines need clear type, good illustrations, and standard plain script for copying.

Make the choice of text-books in connection with choice of pupils. "A First Reader for Foreigners," by Mary F. Sharpe, is especially attractive to classes of women.

The "Foreigner's Guide to English," by Azniv Beshgeturian, would be preferred usually by men.

In teaching Civics, when the pupils have acquired so large a vocabulary as to make that possible, the little book on "Americanization and Citizenship," by Hanson Hart Webster, will be found valuable.

"Plain Facts for Future Citizens," by Mary F.



Sharpe, or "Civics for Americans in the Making," by Anna Plass, could be understood at an earlier stage of advancement.

In preparation for that broader citizenship, including definite teaching of The Ten Commandments, The Golden Rule, The Law of Love, The Beatitudes, The Lord's Prayer and other Biblical material, not so much has yet been put into the form of lesson material for adults who are making their first acquaintance with the English language.

Yet no man or woman who is unacquainted with that Biblical material which is the source of our national ideals can be a genuinely cultivated American in all that the term involves.

"Stories and Songs for Teaching English," by Mary Clark Barnes, is a book of "First Lessons in English," composed of Biblical material, and includes "Suggestions to Teachers."

"Makers of America," by Emma Lilian Dana, a collection of biographical sketches, may follow the study books.

At the Panama Congress, including representatives of twenty-one Republics, meeting together in 1916 for conference concerning the welfare of their respective countries, a Judge of the Supreme Court of a Latin American country publicly called attention to the rich heritage of English-speaking people

in a literature "saturated with Biblical suggestion, allusion and illustration."

Mentioning the lack of this element in the classic literature of some other peoples, he attributed to this difference in popular literature, the difference in life.

In teaching New Americans to read as well as to speak the English language we are opening to them the richest treasury which we possess, our priceless literature.

We shall be poor Neighbors to them if we do not acquaint ourselves with the best features of the life and history of the countries from which they have come.

Czechoslovakia has representatives among us who have carried in their hearts during all the years of their residence among us the convictions, the aspirations, which have had enthusiastic demonstration by their leaders since early in 1915.

"Bohemia and the Czechs," by Will S. Monroe, gives us some acquaintance with the history of these wonderful people.

The little booklet, "The Czechoslovak State," by Charles Pergler, Commissioner of the Czechoslovak Republic in the United States, published in 1919, supplements interestingly the volume by Mr. Monroe.

"Our Slavic Fellow Citizens," by Emily Greene Balch, is so well known that its mention recalls its interest and its value.

"Finland To-day," by George Renwick, published in 1911, shows the forces at work in the native land of some of our most valuable citizens.

"The Immigration Problem," by Jenks and Lauck, is invaluable for reliable statistical information. "The Puritan in England, Holland and America," by Douglas Campbell, indicates our indebtedness to Holland as well as to England for some of our cherished ideals.

"Hungary and its People," by Louis Felberman, gives vivid pictures of modern life in addition to sketches of ancient history which help us to understand modern developments in that country.

Lest we lose ourselves in reading and thinking of old-world nationalities and forget the representatives of those nationalities among us to-day, it is well to turn to the growing literature which introduces us to the personalities and the experiences of some of the men and women who are with us as New Americans.

Have we all read, "From Alien to Citizen," by Dr. Edward A. Steiner? Have we read his "The Immigrant Tide—Its Ebb and its Flow," "On the Trail of the Immigrant," and "The Broken Wall"? Have we read "The Promised Land," by Mary Antin, and "Sons of Italy," by Antonio Manganò?

Of more recent books, "An American in the Making," by M. E. Ravage, and "Out of the Shadow," by Rose Cohen, are among the most vivid and valuable for us.

The revelations of racial and personal characteristics given in these and in an increasing number of books written by our New Americans make it impossible for us even to think of "these foreigners" without discrimination. Hidden under rough exteriors among us to-day are men and women potentially able to do more for America than any one of us can do individually. It may be that the largest personal contribution to the life of our time and of future times which some of us can make will be through opening doors of communication between foreign-born and native-born residents in order to make possible that "mutual giving and taking of contributions from both newer and older Americans in the interest of the common weal," which is essential to unity in our national life.

Let us take for our symbol, not the brazen melting pot, but a living tree with many ingrafted stocks organically related to each other, sharing a common life, bearing various fruits, differing in foliage, no two leaves exactly alike, but all combining to provide shelter and refreshment for the world.



*Reprinted from "Americanization," for November, 1919.*

## FOR STUDY OF THE RACES

At the Harvard summer school of 1919, Mr. John J. Mahoney, in connection with his course in Americanization, appointed a committee to consider the racial backgrounds of the immigrants to this country. The bibliography given below is one result of the work of this committee:

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On the Trail of the Immigrant, Steiner.  
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Schoolmaster of the Great City, A. Patri.  
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Foreign-born American, Jane Robbins, Outlook, August 18, 1906.

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Making of an American, Riis (Danish).  
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Against the Current, Steiner (Hungarian Jew).  
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Heart of Europe, Pergler.

Interpretation of the Russian People, Wiener.

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## Rumania—

Rumania, Her History and Politics, Mitrany.  
Domestic Life in Rumania, Kirke.

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Greeks in America, Burgess.  
Story of the Greek People, Tappan.

## Syria—

New International Encyclopedia.  
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Syrian Christ, Rihbany.  
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